

Wisconsin Indian Lore

Menomini Indian Medicine Plant Collecting Grounds and
Mystery Places Along the Menomonee River in Northeastern Wisconsin.

Information obtained from John V. Satterlee of Keshena,
Wisconsin, by Charles E. Brown, September 12, 1932.

Plant Collecting Grounds

An old Menomini Indian woman told Uncle John that long ago the Indians had along the banks of the Menomonee River a place where they collected plants for medicinal purposes. She was no longer certain of the exact location but thought that it was either above or below the mouth of Pike River, or at Chalk Hills. This place was also a "medicine depository", the medicine being buried in order that it might be "inoculated" with or obtain "power for cures," through the presence of underworld spirits who lived there, beneath the soil. This place the old Indians called "Mos key kiew" Ah nah pa quon nay! Some of the great number of medicinal plants collected at this place by the Indians grew here and nowhere else.

Mystery Places

From Sturgeon Falls down the Menomonee are quite a number of "mysterious drole-haunted" places. Some of these were whirlpools or deep eddys with high banks. Some "Secret Power" dwelt in these pools and eddys and caused the overturning of canoes and the drowning of their occupants. In passing over these places, in going up or down stream the Indians did not dare to speak for fear of arousing the anger of the spirit in the eddy. One of these eddys the Menomini called "Os kotch key key tee, meaning "a place where speaking is prohibited."

There were other "sacred places" along the Menomonee. One of these was probably where Thunder river empties into the Menomonee.

Medicinal Spring

Near Milwaukee, on the trail to Fond du Lac, there was a large "medicine spring". To this spring Indians formerly went to obtain cures from various ailments. Trails approached this spring from several directions. Kettles and other articles were lowered into the spring as "sacrifices" to this shrine.

(also copied for Nelson County file)